

News From U.S. Senator

North Dakota

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DORGAN WINS SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVAL FOR FULL B-52 FUNDING

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan won subcommittee support Wednesday for \$65 million in FY2001 funding to maintain the full B-52 bomber force stationed at Minot Air Force Base and to make necessary upgrades to B-52s still in need of modernization. Dorgan, a member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, said the decision by the subcommittee underscores how critically important the fleet of 94 B-52s at Minot are to our nation's defense.

"Maintaining the B-52 fleet is a better deal for taxpayers and a better deal for our national defense," Dorgan said. "The B-52s are remarkably versatile aircraft and they're paid for. For the cost of building one F15 fighter jet, we will be able to keep and upgrade the full fleet of B-52s."

Dorgan said that the B-52 has played a critical role in past U.S. military operations and the cruise missiles carried by the B-52s will most likely be the first weapons employed in any significant future conflict. Dorgan has repeatedly opposed Air Force plans to retire a portion of the B-52 fleet.

"The Air Force plans to operate the B-52 for another 40 years," Dorgan added. "It only makes sense to invest \$65 million in this B-52 force for our future security, instead of spending billions on B-2 bombers, particularly when new B-2 bombers would cost a billion dollars each and still not have the versatility or life expectancy of the B-52."

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